(a) whether the two recent meetings between India and China have attenuated the immediate tensions;

(b) the steps Government proposes to end the war of nerves on issues like Dalai Lama and Tawang; and

(c) whether Government admits that Chinese belligerence is not easily comprehensible and its bullying tactics are not going to frighten India?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (c) The Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister had a frank and constructive exchange of views on all issues of interest with their Chinese counterparts during their meetings in October, 2009. Both sides agreed to strengthen political trust and understanding and to use the existing mechanisms for bilateral cooperation to resolve all issues amicably in the spirit of the Strategic and Cooperative Partnership. Government has reiterated its clear and consistent position that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India and that Dalai Lama is free to visit any part of India, to the Chinese side. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's interests and takes all necessary measures to protect them.

Visit of Richard Holbrooke

†3128. SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Richard Holbrooke, the special ambassador of USA was not given permission to visit New Delhi, recently; and

(b) if so, the reasons for turning down the request?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) No. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's proposed visit to India recently was cancelled by the US side themselves.

(b) Does not arise.

Dispute over maritime boundaries with Bangladesh

3129. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Bangladesh have a dispute over maritime boundaries;

(b) if so the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Bangladesh has threatened to take the issue to UN; and

(d) if so, the stand of Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (d) Yes. Government of Bangladesh has referred the issue of demarcation of maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh for arbitration under Article VII of the United Nations on the Law of the Sea. This is a compulsory arbitration procedure.